

INFORMAL REMARKS

Applicant herein offers amendments and remarks in response to final office action of 04/03/2007, intended to bring the application into condition for allowance. No new matter is added.

Status of specification, abstract and claims

Claims 1-20 remain pending with claims 1-7, 9-12, 14, 17-20 amended. Amendments to the specification and abstract are likewise offered herewith.

Office's Response to Arguments

The Office stated in paragraph 5 that the meaning of the term “pre-installed” is unclear and that it was being taken as meaning “prior to completing construction of the drilling structure and the well bore.” Applicant asserts this to be a substantive misinterpretation and offers these amendments and remarks for clarification.

The specification and drawings clearly explain that the liners are pre-installed or in other words, as in the original language of claim 5, “pre-positioned” at the bore site and, as at its publication page 2 line 14, not installed until “*after the BOP and marine drilling riser have been installed.*” Also see the description of Fig 1 at publication page 4, line 1 as amended, the liners are “pre-positioned” and then at line 6 “a bore hole 20 is drilled or jetted....without using a drilling riser and BOP.” At line 13, the “liners 1, 3 are installed.” Applicant asserts that these examples support the explanation of what the terms “pre-install”, “pre-installed”, and “pre-installing” mean in this context. Notwithstanding, in order to clarify the point for readers of the specification, and consistent with the words of original text of claim 5, “*pre-installed in a position*”, Applicant has amended the specification and claims throughout to replace the adjective or descriptive term “pre-install*” with the term “pre-position*”. Applicant asserts this amendment to in no way change the scope of the specification or the claims and adds no new subject matter.

The Office further noted that the method of claim 1 was not limited to a sequence. Applicant has herein amended and asserts claim 1 to be limited to a sequence.

35 USC 103 Rejections

The Office continued the 35 USC 103 rejection of claims 1-4, 11 and 12 based on Hahn. Applicant incorporates its comments from above and respectfully asserts the points of departure of the Applicant's claims as amended, and Hahn, to overcome the rejection, and remarks thereon as follows.

Applicant has amended claim 1 to be a *sequence*, and further limited the sequence to, as here para-phrased: Drilling of the first bore section at the subsea bore site *riserlessly*; followed by a *pre-positioning* (ahead of the installation of the riser and BOP) of a liner assembly of a larger diameter than the riser; then *connecting the drilling rig to the bore site with the drilling riser*; and finally, *installing the (larger diameter) liner assembly* in the wellbore.

The method as here claimed is clearly antithetical to Hahn, which clearly depicts a larger diameter casing 112 analogous to Applicant's riser and a lower section 114 and liner 120 analogous to Applicants liner, where lower section 114 is expressly stated at page 4, line 13, to be of smaller diameter than casing 112. There is no way to imagine from Hahn's disclosure a pre-positioning of liner 120 below a substantial part of the casing 112 prior to its installation. There is clearly no teaching, suggestion, motivation in Hahn leading to the invention as claimed herein, and no rational basis for asserting so. For these reasons, Applicant asserts claims 1-4, 11 and 12 to be in condition for allowance and respectfully requests reconsideration.

The Office continued its rejection claims 5, 7-10, 13, and 19 as to Hahn. Applicant incorporates its remarks above regarding Hahn and its amendments to the specification and claims, and asserts that the limitation of claim 5 amended, where the liner is of larger diameter than the riser and is pre-positioned (not yet installed) below a substantial part of the riser, along

with the other limitations, is sufficient to overcome the rejection. Applicant requests reconsideration of claim 5 and claims dependent thereon.

The Office continued its rejection of claims 6, 14-18, and 20 as to Hahn. Applicant incorporates its remarks above regarding Hahn and its amendments to the specification and claims, and asserts that the limitations of claim 6 amended, where the liner is of larger diameter than the riser and is pre-positioned (not yet installed) below a substantial part of the riser, along with other limitations, is sufficient to overcome the rejection. Applicant requests reconsideration of claim 6 and claims dependent thereon.

The amendments and remarks are further supported by Figures 1-7 as described in the specification.

Applicant believes the above amendments and remarks to be fully responsive to the Office Action, thereby placing this application in condition for allowance. No new matter is added. Applicant requests speedy reconsideration, and further requests that Examiner contact its attorney by telephone, facsimile, or email for quickest resolution, if there are any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

/Vernon C. Maine, Reg. No. 37,389/

Cus. No. 24222
Maine & Asmus
PO Box 3445
Nashua, NH 03061-3445
Tel. No. (603) 886-6100, Fax. No. (603) 886-4796
Info@maineandasmus.com

Vernon C. Maine, Reg. No. 37,389
Scott J. Asmus, Reg. No. 42,269
Andrew P. Cernota, Reg. No. 52,711
Kristina M. Grasso, Reg. No. 39,205
Attorneys/Agents for Applicant